

APPENDIX 3 – HIGH LEVEL OPTIONS FOR INVESTMENT

Draft Investment Options

Carriageways

The forecast model will be used to test a set of options using anticipated capital budgets (and reflecting different self-assessment outcomes). It is also proposed to identify an optimum investment option that may require further elevated investment. This will form the basis for a Challenge Fund Bid to be prepared in 2017/18.

Within the basic LTP capital budgets and Growth Fund capital projected to 2020/21 the high level options for carriageways are set out below:

1. Prioritise reconstruction of strategic roads, namely A127, A1159 and A13 and routes that are vital for the resilience of the town (as defined in the Resilient Network) where there are signs of structural failure. This would be at the expense of local residential roads which would be likely to begin to decline in condition. This would be most likely to negatively impact on public satisfaction through the National highway Survey.
2. Enable a more even spread of investment to minimise decline in the condition on any of the road classes. This would require that less extensive treatments are applied on the Strategic and Resilient Network Routes that will have less longevity (such as replacing the surface course only instead of reconstructing) and overall would be difficult to sustain beyond the medium term with projected levels of funding.
3. As with Option 2, but increase the use of preventative treatments such as microasphalt on mid-life and more lightly trafficked roads at the expense of some resurfacing and reconstruction of roads in poor condition. This may have less impact on public satisfaction in the short to medium term, but will reduce long term costs and slow deterioration to a manageable rate.

The 4th option will be to explore a strategy that will require additional funding to provide an optimum mix of reconstruction, resurfacing and preventative maintenance spread across the road classes.

Footways and cycleways

In the short to medium term, the current condition assessment points to the need for a programme of renewals for footways and pedestrianised areas in the Town Centre.

In the medium term, the options need to consider the overall levels of investment required in footways and cycleways as compared with the other infrastructure types, how footway and cycleway maintenance programmes are prioritised within budgets and the appropriate materials to be used. The key questions that the TAMS will set to address are set out as follows:

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- Is the overall level of service appropriate?
- Should it be enhanced or conversely is the Council willing to allow some decline in service level in favour other priorities such as carriageways, drainage and structures?
- Do we focus only on the highest risk locations for claims or,
- Include locations that are important for people with mobility impairments or,
- Seek to invest additional money in maintenance of local and district centre footways to improve the attractiveness of these areas for inward investment?
- How effective is the ad-hoc expenditure on reactive maintenance and how does this fit within the Capital Programme?
- Finally, there is a desire to balance the need for an attractive public realm with the risk and cost that flagged and modular footways present in terms of their resistance to vehicle overrun and severe trip hazards. Careful detailing of construction details and restricting the likelihood of vehicle intrusion is essential

The prioritisation of footway and cycleway programmes needs to be informed by the use of a risk hierarchy following the recommended approach in the Code of Practice for Well-Maintained Highways. The current Code of Practice for Well-Maintained Highways sets out broad criteria for prioritisation of inspections and maintenance although, these are due to be revised in Autumn 2015 and the hierarchy classification will be revised in line with this review. The TAMS will inform this process by including a Prioritisation Framework that will detail the criteria for assessing risk on footways and condition based thresholds at which maintenance is required.

It is likely that the revised Code of Practice will place greater emphasis on the use of local data and issues to inform classifications rather than stipulating exactly what the criteria should be. It is therefore crucial to establish a process for continued validation and review of the classifications in response to new data.

A key challenge therefore remains to obtain better detail on the following:

- The geographical distribution of injury and damage claims and their association with footway condition and safety defects.
- The geographical distribution and cost of maintenance and repairs and their association with footway condition and safety defects.

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- Areas of high footfall in residential areas and on routes to local facilities.
- Routes that are particularly important for people with mobility impairments either by virtue of the obstruction free width of the footway or by the link to and from facilities or sheltered accommodation.
- Routes that are used by an increasingly ageing population who use public transport or walking routes.

This data is needed to support statistical analyses and modelling that will help understand the costs and benefits of different approaches and to further refine the policy towards the use of different types of interventions (such as replacement of flags with bituminous surfacing).